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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BOGOTA 001017

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR INL/LP

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MASS](#) [PGOV](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: AIR BRIDGE DENIAL: DECEMBER 2003 PROGRAM UPDATE
AND END OF YEAR RESULTS (CORRECTED COPY - SUPERSEDES REFTEL
BOGOTA 00686)

REF: A. SEC2003 STATE 265910

1. (U) Summary: Following is the December Air Bridge Denial (ABD) activity report required by ref A. There were over 2400 tracks sorted, of which 26 were declared Unidentified, Assumed Suspect (UAS) Tracks, with one pPhase I and two Phase II events during the month of December. ABD program issues of concern include the availability of interceptors and focused operations. End Summary.

ABD Tracks

2. (U) In December 2003, over 2400 tracks were sorted, of which 26 were declared UAS aircraft. The GOC did not react to 15 UAS, five due to non-availability of assets or proximity to borders/international waters, six due to the track information being dated or insufficient, and the remaining four were eventually identified as friendly.

Phase II Events

3. (SBU) On 11 December 11, 2003, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Airborne Early Warning (AEW) P-3 aircraft discovered a track in near the Colombia-Brazil border in the Dog's Head area. The Citation was airborne, and responded, and . JIATF-S declared it a UAS. The Citation made radar then visual contact with the UAS. The UAS, a white single-engine aircraft, then landed in San Pedro, an illegal airfield near Caruru in Vaupes Department. 7 to 10 individuals offloaded the aircraft was then off-loaded, then moved off the runway, and concealed it into trees at the eastern end of the runway and covered it with a tarp. The Citation completed pPhase I, and . Phase II was requested and approved but the Air and Ground Safety Monitors did not relay this to JIATF-S. When the phase II was accomplished, JIATF-S objected and during the ensuing discussions, the interceptor aircraft on station ran low on fuel and had to return to base. where although the FAC Commander gave approval for phase II, this step was never transmitted as completed over the radio, so JIATF objected when Phase II was completed without the approval having been relayed. The A-37 only had about 5 minutes station time available, so while the objection was discussed they had to leave. The Citation had been airborne for one and a half hours before phase I started, so they would not be able to stay for a long time. The Citation also ran low on fuel and returned to base, so the event was terminated. and the Citation returned to base. There was talk about sending another A-37 and another Citation and starting as a new event but eventually there was no further action. The review of this event underscored the is event emphasized the need for safety monitors to adhere to the checklist and ensure that continuous, effective communication is maintained throughout the event. emphasize checklist step completion and getting acknowledgement for these.

4. (SBU) On 16 December 16, 2003, the ICE P-3 reported a track about to enter Colombia from Brazil in the Dog's Head area from Brazil. The Citation tracker was airborne and entered an orbit. A Tucano interceptor based in was airborne from San Jose de Guaviare was also airborne. The target made repeated a couple of feints towards Colombian Airspace, but e. Each time, they returned to Brazilian airspace to avoid interception. after the Citation maneuvered to intercept. The target orbited for 1 hour and 15 minutes before it made it's final move.

Once the target crossing into Colombian airspace. ed the border, The Citation and the Tucano moved in for the interception. . Phase I was completed. The target headed towards Caruru with the Tucano in trail. and Phase II was approved, but at this time by then it was too dark for the Tucano to maintain keep visual contact and safely fire warning shots. The runway at Caruru was illuminated, however, enabling the target aircraft lit up in time for the target to land. The target aircraft was then moved to the vicinity of structures, at which point GOC authorities elected not to proceed with the event. N and it was immediately pushed into a hangar surrounded by structures,

making it impossible to proceed any further. An AC-47 had been scrambled towards the area but Host Nation decided to end the event at that point.

NOTE: The GOC Host Nation has stationed/moved some Tucano aircraft to San Jose de Guaviare, which effectively/practically doubles the interceptor availability in the Dog's Head area. Two Tucanos were available for this event. San Jose is almost halfway between Apiay and Caruru, but the runway is not usable by the A-37. Though the Tucanos are considerably slower than the A-37s and have shorter range, but having them/their availability at this location gives enhances the possibility of completing interceptions/events in this critical area of Colombia. End note/us greater possibility of completing an intercept.

Ongoing Activities

13. An ABD IPR was held 9-10 December. As a result, it was agreed to focus ABD assets with the ICE P-3 when one is in Colombia to maximize use of that asset. This was done starting mid December and will be resumed once a P-3 returns to Colombia, which is expected to happen mid Jan 04. Next IPR will be 29 Jan 04 at Key West. The February 24-25, 2004 IPR will also serve as a semi-annual Program Management Review and will be held at Key West.

Ongoing Issues

45. (SBU) Interceptor availability continues to be a concern. Most activity has centered in the Dog Head's/Caruru area, but the distance from interceptor bases and lack of GOC ground-based forces in this area has limited our ability to bring events to a conclusion. All four aircraft destroyed thus far have been in the northern half of Colombia, where fighters are located more closely to targets. With no fixed date for the arrival of the OV-10s undergoing maintenance in the United States, and nearly half the A-37 fleet down for long-term maintenance/non-availability of parts, MOD officials have again raised the possibility of acquiring additional interceptor and tracker aircraft. During the December 9-10, 2003, ABD Interim Program Review (IPR), the GOC agreed to focus its limited ABD assets (trackers and interceptors) in those areas where the ICE P-3 was programmed to operate. The USG agreed to explore means of upgrading facilities to permit the basing of interceptors closer to the Colombia-Brazil border. The GOC also has plans to station ground-forces in this area during first quarter of 2004. The next IPR is scheduled for January 29, 2004, in Key West. The February 24-25, 2004, IPR will also serve as a semi-annual Program Management Review.

CY 2003 Numbers

65. (SBU) The ABD program was active/in action for the final/last four months of 2003. There were twelve/12 ABD events in Colombian airspace, in which seven aircraft were forced to land. There were four Phase I, two Phase II, and six Phase III events resulting in with four/5 destroyed aircraft destroyed and one receiving an undetermined amount of damage. There were six aircraft and one Go-Fast boat were captured and with a total of 6.9 MT of cocaine were seized/impounded. The eleven destroyed/impounded aircraft (5/6) for one trimester compares favorably to full-year numbers achieved under the previous ABD program in the 1998 (16/12) and 1999 (15/16) timeframes.

7. (SBU) Comment: The ABD program, re-started in August 2003 following a two-year hiatus, is effectively a new program with new personnel and procedures. We are in constant contact with the GOC and the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) to identify and exploit possible program improvements. The partial-year results achieved in 2003 are, in our view, all the more impressive when viewed in the context of a work in progress. End comment. Most of the activity has centered in the Dog Head's/Caruru area. However, the distance from interceptor bases and lack of government presence in the area have made most of the activities there close calls (Four Phase I and two Phase II, with two Phase III where the damage to the aircraft was undetermined). All four destroyed aircraft were destroyed in the northern half of Colombia, where fighters are more closely located to targets. The ten destroyed/impounded aircraft (4/6) for one quarter project to yearly numbers similar to those obtained under ABD in 1998 (16/12) and 1999 (15/16). This in spite of new procedures, new crews, limited fighter availability and very limited P-3 presence during this period.

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